

**TRAFFIC ENGINEERING DIVISION**

**MARICOPA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Policy/Procedure Guideline**

**SECTION 24:** Primitive Roads Classification

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** February 13, 1995

**PARAGRAPH:** 1. Purpose

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**1. PURPOSE:**

To establish a uniform policy among the Counties of Arizona in adopting a resolution, policy/procedures and signing guidelines for the designation of "Primitive Roads", A.R.S. § 18-207.01.

**2. DESCRIPTION:**

To help further clarify what roads are primitive, the following policy will define road criteria, cross section, and signing guidelines.

Primitive Road Classification applies to roads meeting three fundamental criteria and any or all of the other criteria:

a. **Fundamental Criteria:**

1. Were opened before June 13, 1975
2. Were not constructed in accordance with County Standards
3. Are not county or state highways

b. **Functional Class:**

Primitive: local and collector

c. **Predominant Traffic Types:**

Dispersed recreation, local access, government, farm or ranch, administrative, commercial/cooperator (i.e., logging, mining, utilities access)

d. **Surface Type:**

Native material, gravel, or substandard paving

e. **Cross Section:**

1. Does not conform to county standards
2. Has inconsistent or irregular width
3. Has a surface which can vary from native material and rock, gravel, to substandard paving
4. Drainage, poor to non-existent

f. **Signing Requirements:**

The county shall place signs that state 'primitive road, caution, use at your own risk, this surface is not regularly maintained" on roads that are selected by the County for designation as a primitive road in locations adequate to warn the public.

The minimum allowable warning sign shall be a horizontal rectangle with a size of 30 x 48 inches-See Exhibit "B". It shall have a yellow background with black legend and border. This sign is intended for use on roadways that have a reasonable and prudent operating speed in excess of 25 M.P.H.

Warning signs shall be installed within 300 feet of the beginnings of a designated "Primitive Road".

\* For road segments with termini of 6 miles or greater in length, additional warning signs shall be installed at 3 mile to 7 mile intervals.

Warning signs shall be installed only at the entrances to

Sub-divisions that are designated as "Primitive Roads". The minimum allowable warning sign shall be a horizontal rectangle with a size of 18 x 24 inches-see Exhibit "C". This sign is intended for use only in platted sub-divisions that have a posted speed of 25 M.P.H.

\* *This paragraph is the only difference between the policy of MCDOT and the AACE policy (does not include this paragraph).*

### 3. EXHIBITS:

- a. Exhibit "A" is a copy of - HOUSE BILL 2257, AN ACT, AMENDING TITLE 18, CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE 1; RELATING TO COUNTY HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND ABANDONMENT. Arizona Revised Statutes § 18-207.01.  
Designation of primitive roads.
- b. Exhibit "B" shows an example of the minimum acceptable "Primitive Road" warning sign.
- c. Exhibit "C" shows an example of the warning sign to be used at entrances to sub-divisions.

### 4. BACKGROUND:

In the summer of 1993, county engineers and county attorneys from around Arizona along with staff from the County Supervisors Association met in Payson to discuss a growing concern for public entities that maintain rural roads that were not built to county standards. These concerns stem from the liability associated with these roadways. In an effort to reduce this exposure, a draft piece of legislation was drawn up and taken to the Arizona legislature. This bill was submitted in the House of Representatives (H.B. 2257) and passed into law as A.R.S. § 18-207.01 in the spring of 1994. It becomes state law beginning July 17, 1994.

A.R.S. § 18-207.01 gives the Board of Supervisors for each county the authority to classify public roads within its

jurisdiction as primitive roads. Only roads opened before June 13, 1975 and not built in accordance with county standards can be classified as primitive roads. The Statute also requires the county to sign these primitive roads in a way that lets the public know that the roads are not maintained on a regularly scheduled basis.

## **5. AUTHORIZATION:**

A.R.S. § 18-207.01 - Designation of Primitive Roads

A.R.S. § 28-643 requires local authorities to install traffic control devices.

### **28-643. Local traffic control devices**

Local authorities in the respective jurisdictions shall place and maintain such traffic control devices upon highways under their jurisdictions as they deem necessary to indicate and to carry out the provisions of this chapter of local traffic ordinances or to regulate, warn or guide traffic. All traffic control devices erected shall conform to the state manual and specifications.

## **6. REFERENCES:**

Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 18, Highways and Bridges

A.R.S. § 18-201.        Establishing, altering, or abandoning  
                                 local highways.

A.R.S. § 18-207.        Maintenance of public roads and  
                                 streets not within city or town.

A.R.S. § 18-207.01.    Designation of primitive roads

Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 28, Transportation

A.R.S. § 28-641.        State sign manual

A.R.S. § 28-643.        Local traffic control devices

1988 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets

and Highways,  
Section 1A-3, Responsibility for Traffic Control Devices  
AACE Policy - Adopted August 26, 1994

**7. ATTACHMENTS:**

1. A.R.S. § 18-201. Establishing, altering, or abandoning local highways.
2. A.R.S. § 18-207. Maintenance of public roads and streets not within city or town
3. An example of the recommended Resolution for the Establishment of a Primitive Road Classification. This document will be submitted by each county to their respective Board of Supervisors for approval. This document is attached for information purposes only, it will be used as a stand alone document.

**ADOPTED BY:** Arizona Association of County Engineers  
August 26, 1994

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Albert G. Letzkus, P.E.  
County Traffic Engineer